

PERFINS FROM TRANSVAAL and ORANGE RIVER COLONY

by: Howard E. Ferguson (#255)

Recently I purchased a small lot of Transvaal, surcharged CSAR for Central South African Railway. With it were 7 Perfins with the same initials. Close examination showed many small differences between the seven - different shaped letters, and different measurements.

My curiosity, never at a very low ebb began to rise. The Checklist of Foreign Perfins, prepared by R.A. Snow (#475) reveals that among the collectors of foreign Perfins, six members report items from Transvaal, and the most any one had was six. We wonder - were these all Perfined "CSAR", and if so, are they of different types of letters? different measurements?

A footnote in Scotts mentions the surcharge, but "Scott-like" ignores any reference to Perfins. I tracked them down in Robson Lowe's "Encyclopedia of British Empire Postage Stamps", Vol. 2, "The Empire in Africa". They are listed there under the 1901 issue:

1/2d Yellow Green	3d Black & Brown
1d Black & Purple	4d Black & Orange
2d Black and Sage Green	6d Black & Red Brown.

(Editor's Note: Listed in Yvert & Tellier, Vol. #3, as Official Stamps (Timbres de Service) Notation states that in 1909 stamps of 1904-06 issue were perforated CS/AR, and an illustration of the Perfin is shown. Number of holes is: 7-9- / 8-10, and each measures about 4 1/2 mm. Values thus treated are: 1/2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 1 sh. Gibbons does not comment much, merely stating: "Many of the King's Head stamps are found overprinted or perforated "C.S.A.R." for use on Central South African Railways.")

Both Scott and Robson Lowe mention Orange River Colony - 1903 issues - having overprint "CSAR", but nothing said about Perfins. The writer has a copy of the 1d Orange River with same Perfin. Snow's list shows only 4 members reporting Perfins from Orange River, and most any had was 2 different. (Editor's Note: Both Y&T and Gibbons mention "C.S.A.R." surcharges, but nothing said about Perfins. The surcharges were applied to Orange River Colony official stamps of 1903 during 1905. ) Questions the writer has are: What values exist with Perfin applied - both Transvaal & Orange River Colony stamps?

Also: How many types are there? On the stamps in the possession of the writer, the main differences are variations of the "S" - where sometimes the bottom loop is larger than top, other times they are the same. Also, the "R" is found both with a flat top and with a rounded top. Are these the results of different dies, or are they counterfeit?

If other collectors would report to me any stamps from either of these two countries with Perfins of any type, perhaps we could compile a listing of this material, which could be printed in the Bulletin and so distributed to all members. The railroads of Transvaal and Orange River Colony, during the colonial period 1902-10, were combined to form the Central South African Railway, and parcel post stamps were also issued by this company.

Any information at all on this subject would be appreciated. Write to:

Howard E. Ferguson, (#255)  
P.O. Box #235,  
YARMOUTH PORT, Massachusetts.